

REMARKS

Claims 54, 56, 76, 78-83 and 85-99 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action dated November 19, 2003, the Examiner objected to claims 54, 56, 76, 78-83, and 85-99, citing various informalities. Additionally, the Examiner rejected claims 83 and 86 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,100,187 to Hintermaier ("Hintermaier").

As a preliminary matter, applicant notes that, to date, the Form PTO-1449 from the Information Disclosure Statements filed on August 25, 2003 and November 7, 2003, respectively, have not been returned. The Examiner is respectfully requested to review the PTO-1449 documents and to initial and sign the documents before returning them to the undersigned attorney.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for his careful review of the present application and for his indication of allowable subject matter. With regard to the Examiner's objections regarding various informalities, applicant notes that the Examiner has objected, *specifically*, to the recitation of "providing a second conductive layer *adjacent* the first conductive layer..." (Emphasis added). Applicant notes that the use of "adjacent" in the claim limitation is not necessarily interchangeable with other terms, such as "abutting" or "directly contacting", which would indicate the intimate relationship between the two layers, as asserted by the Examiner. Instead, applicant maintains that the use of "adjacent" is properly employed in the present context, as indicating that the conductive layers are close, or proximate to one another.

In the interest of expediting the issuance of the allowable subject matter, the applicant is nevertheless amending claims according to the Examiner's recommendation. It is understood that the applicant is amending the present claims solely for the purpose of expediting the issuance of claims in the present case, and does not agree with the Examiner's interpretation of "adjacent", as outlined above, and further does not agree with the Examiner's rejection based on the prior art. Accordingly, the applicant reserves the right to present the claims in their present, un-amended form, if desired, in any continuation, divisional or continuation-in-part application.

Turning now to the claims, claim 54, as amended, recites in pertinent part, "...providing a second conductive layer *over the dielectric layer* after exposure of the first conductive layer to the material selected from the group." (Emphasis added). Applicant maintains that the foregoing amendment of claim 54 fully addresses the Examiner's objection. Claim 54 is therefore in condition for allowance. Claims depending from claim 54 are also allowable based upon the allowable form of the base claim and further in view of the additional limitations present in the dependent claims.

Claim 83, as amended, recites in pertinent part: "...forming a second conductive layer *on the dielectric layer* after exposure of the first conductive layer to the material selected from the group..." (Emphasis added). Applicant again submits that the foregoing amendment of claim 83 fully addresses the Examiner's objection. Claim 83 is therefore also in condition for allowance. Claims depending from claim 83 are also allowable based upon the allowable form of the base claim and further in view of the additional limitations present in the dependent claims.

Claim 93, as amended, recites in pertinent part, "...forming a second conductive layer *on the dielectric layer* after exposure of the first conductive layer to the material selected from the group." (Emphasis added). Claim 93 is therefore also in condition for allowance. Claims depending from claim 93 are also allowable based upon the allowable form of the base claim and further in view of the additional limitations present in the dependent claims.

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable.
Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures:

Postcard

Fee Transmittal Sheet (+ copy)

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